no delay on the part of Aquaculture Authority in issuing approvals for shrimp aquaculture farms.

Banning import of poultry products

1705. SHRI K. RAMA MOHAN A RAO:
SHRI RAMA MUNI REDDY SIRIGIREDDY:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that poultry products are imported from various countries, including the countries where disease like Avian Influenza nare prevalent;

(b) if so, whether Government propose to take any action to ban import of poultry products from such countries;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI HUKUMDEO NARAYAN YADAV): (a) and (b) Import of all poultry products are allowed from various countries against Sanitary Import Permit after conducting the Risk Analysis on International Principles as per Notification No. 655(E) dated 7th July, 2001 issued under the provision of Livestock Importation Act, 1898 to prevent the ingress of exotic diseases. However, the import of all poultry products and live poultry has been prohibited from the countries where Avian Influenza has been reported as per Notification No. 801 (E) dated 17.8.2001 issued under the provision of the said Act.

(c) and (d) Do not arise.

Decline in foodgrains output

1706. SHRI ABANI ROY: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that there is a sharp decline in outputof foodgrains during 2002-03 as reported in the Hindu' dated 12th February, 2003;

(b) if so, the factors responsible for sharp decline in output of foodgrains;

(c) whether Government in consultation with State Govemment/NGOs propose to formulate strategy to boost production of foodgrains and also to improve output; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI HUKUMDEO NARAYAN YADAV): (a) Yes, Sir. According to the second Advance Estimates released by Government on 10.2.2003, and quoted in the Hindu dated 12th February, 2003, the total foodgrains production during 2002-03 is likely to be 183.17 million tones which is 28.85 million tones or 13.61 % less than the record production of 212.02 million tones in 2001-02.

(b) The weak monsoon and the consequent moisture stress prevailing during the monsoon and the post-monsoon period has adversely affected the agricultural production during Kharif and Rabi seasons of 2002-03.

(c) and (d) The agriculture production in the country is greatly influenced by the extent of rainfall and its temporal and spatial spread because about 60% of the net area sown is dependent on rains for water. However, the production of various crops shows a long-term upward trend, albeit with fluctuations.

In order to further improve the performance of the agriculture sector, the Government have taken a number of initiatives such as promotion of watershed development programmes, emphasis on developing and increasing availability of agricultural credit, Market Information Network, National Agricultural Insurance Scheme etc. Besides, the Government also encourage farmers to increase production through price policy which includes implementation of Minimum Support Price and Market Intervention Schemes. Apart from these, the Government have also adopted macro-management mode for providing assistance to the States. The Macro-Management Scheme integrates 27 schemes into one for supplementing and complementing the efforts of State Governments through work plans. This gives flexibility to States to address specific problems faced by them depending on local

requirements, avoid overlapping in the contents of different schemes and aim at all round development of agriculture. Since agriculture is a State subject, the Union Government are implementing the above-mentioned schemes with the cooperation of the State Governments.

Standing committee for agricultural marketing reforms

1707. SHRI K. NATWAR SINGH:

DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to refer to answer to Unstarred Question 1042 given in the Rajya Sabha on the 29th November, 2002 and state:

(a) whether the report of the Standing Committee of State Ministers and representatives of concerned Central Government Deptt./Agencies has been submitted to Government; and

(b) if so, what are the steps being taken to implement the same?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI HUKUMDEO NARAYAN YADAV): (a) and (b) The Standing committee on Agricultural Marketing Reforms set up under the Chairmanship of Hon'ble Minister of State for Agriculture met at New Delhi on 29.1.2003 and made the following recommendations:—

(i) The State may appropriately amend, wherever needed, the respective APMC Acts to pave way for promotion of direct marketing and contract farming arrangements and for establishment of competitive agricultural markets/marketing infrastructure in private and cooperative sectors, subject to safeguarding farmers' interests.

(ii) To request Reserve Bank of India/National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development to evolve a simplified procedure in consultation with banks for sanction of pledge loan on the agriculture commodities stored in rural godowns and to ensure that warehousing receipts/godown receipts issued by the operations of rural godowns are acceptable to bankers for providing marketing credit.

(iii) The Central Warehousing Corporation, Ministry of Food, to prepare